

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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**Agenda Item 3**

**Conference Room Document 7**  
**(English, French, Spanish)**

## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**

### **CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE**

**Thirty-Third Session**  
**Washington, DC., USA, October 23-28, 2000**

#### **Preliminary Report of the *ad hoc* Expert Consultation on Risk Assessment of Microbiological Hazards in Food and Related Matters**

#### **PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ADDITIONAL TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE IN THE AREA OF MICROBIOLOGICAL RISK ASSESSMENT/RISK MANAGEMENT**

##### **Comments provided by the United States of America**

The current terms of reference for the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene encompass five areas of work:<sup>1</sup>

- (a) to draft basic provisions on food hygiene applicable to all food;
- (b) to consider, amend if necessary and endorse provisions on hygiene prepared by Codex commodity committees and contained in Codex commodity standards; and;
- (c) to consider, amend if necessary, and endorse provisions on hygiene prepared by Codex commodity committees and contained in Codex codes of practice unless, in specific cases, the Commission has decided otherwise, or
- (d) to draft provisions on hygiene applicable to specific food items or food groups, whether coming within the terms of reference of a Codex commodity committee or not;
- (e) to consider specific hygiene problems assigned to it by the Commission.

<sup>1</sup> Codex Alimentarius Commission, Procedural Manual, Eleventh Edition, Subsidiary Bodies of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, pp 106-108.

The area of microbiological risk assessment and microbiological risk management is not specifically addressed in any of these terms of reference.

To date, work in these areas has been handled via Term of Reference “e”, through the approval of specific work items by the Commission.

The work of CCFH in the area of microbiological risk assessment and risk management is very important internationally in both protecting public health and facilitating trade. Additionally, it is likely that the Committee will have significant work in this area for some time to come. Given this, it would seem appropriate for the Committee to recommend to the Commission the addition of additional Terms of Reference that would give the Committee authority to undertake, on a permanent basis, work in the area of microbiological risk assessment and microbiological risk management for specific microorganism/food commodity combinations. The Terms of Reference should consider the relationship between FAO/WHO Expert Groups on Microbiological Risk Assessment (and any permanent body that may arise from them) and the Committee, and microbiological risk management activities the Committee may undertake.

The wording for such Term(s) of Reference might be as follows.

- Working with the Joint WHO/FAO Expert Group on Microbiological Risk Assessment, determine priority microorganism/food commodity combinations and advise on risk management interests, options and restrictions.
- To provide advice to member countries pertaining to the risk management implications of the microbiological risk assessments developed by FAO/WHO Expert Groups for specific microorganism/food commodity combinations.

The United States would suggest the Committee consider recommending to the Commission the adoption of these or similar additional Terms of Reference.